

**Billing Code: 4710-05**

Department of State

[Public Notice ]

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request**

**for Grant Proposals:** EducationUSA Advising Program

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 19.432

**Key Dates: Program Start Date:** October 1, 2012, pending the availability of funds

**Application Deadline:** July 6, 2012

**Executive Summary:** The Educational Information and Resources Branch in the Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for three assistance awards to administer components of the Office's EducationUSA Advising Program in Fiscal Year 2013. Public and private non-profit organizations or consortia of eligible organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) may submit

proposals to cooperate with the Bureau in the administration of the EducationUSA Advising Support Program as noted below. Please see section II.) Award Information below for additional details.

To facilitate effective communication of ECA's Educational Information and Resources Branch (ECA/A/S/A) with the organizations cooperating in the administration of this program, award recipients must have offices and staff in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Applicants who do not currently have offices and staff in the Washington, D.C. area must include in their proposals a detailed plan for establishing an office and staff in Washington, D.C. by October 1, 2012. The award recipients will bear the costs related to establishing the offices and staff. No such costs may be included in the budget submission for this program. The award recipients must have e-mail capability, access to Internet resources, and the ability to exchange data electronically with all partners involved in the EducationUSA Advising Program.

The goal of this program is to increase international student mobility between the United States and other

countries by providing support to EducationUSA, the network of overseas educational advising centers affiliated with the U.S. Department of State. EducationUSA centers operate in a wide variety of organizational settings around the world, including public affairs sections of U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright commissions, binational centers, foreign universities, and U.S. non-government organizations. The support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) for these centers varies by center and region and ranges from support for educational resources and adviser professional development to, in a limited number of locations, support for office operations. In addition, all EducationUSA centers receive specialized, highly tailored guidance from ECA-supported Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and country coordinators who are based in strategic locations around the world.

EducationUSA centers encourage the enrollment of international students at U.S. institutions of higher education. Advising staffs at EducationUSA centers provide accurate, comprehensive, and current information about the complex range of higher education opportunities to members

of the public in 169 countries. EducationUSA centers also assist U.S. institutions of higher education in their overseas outreach efforts and encourage study abroad by Americans through the development of study abroad opportunities by U.S. universities.

It is ECA's intent to award three cooperative agreements for one base year plus two option years for an estimated total amount of \$21,400,000 over three years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Applicant organizations may submit proposals for Component A, for Component B, or for both components of the EducationUSA Advising Program. Applicant organizations must submit separate proposals with budgets and narratives outlining a comprehensive strategy for the administration and implementation of each program component for which they are applying. Organizations submitting proposals under Component B for both regions should submit a separate proposal for each region.

**Component A: Global EducationUSA Services: Regional and Country Coordination, Outreach, and Adviser Professional Development**

The recipient organization will provide programmatic oversight, administer outreach and marketing activities on behalf of EducationUSA, and provide logistical support and human resources services, including professional development opportunities, for regional and country advising coordinators. The recipient will also administer a professional development program in the United States and overseas for EducationUSA advisers. This component includes:

- Support for Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) based in Sub-Saharan Africa (two), Europe and Eurasia (three), East Asia and the Pacific (three), North Africa and the Middle East (one), South and Central Asia (two), and the Western Hemisphere (three). These REAC positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA.
- Support for Country Coordinators in Brazil, Mexico, and Russia. These positions may be adjusted, reduced, or supplemented in consultation with ECA.

- Support for online EducationUSA advising outreach to Iranians in Farsi and English.
- Design and implementation of a series of workshops and professional development experiences overseas and in the United States for EducationUSA advisers to deepen their understanding of U.S. higher education and of the U.S. public diplomacy context of their work.

The recipient organization will support the EducationUSA advising effort through coordinated outreach and promotion to international student audiences, on-going communication of substantive guidance on educational issues to EducationUSA centers, and the innovative use of technology to reach young audiences effectively. A full-time marketing/outreach coordinator will administer the outreach effort, including the coordination of updated online materials in key languages, such as Farsi, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Bahasa. Other languages may be added in consultation with ECA.

REACs prepare and provide to ECA, U.S. embassies/consulates, and Fulbright commissions annual written assessments of current issues faced by EducationUSA

advising centers with specific reference to regional trends in student mobility. REACs also provide, for review and approval by ECA, periodic written recommendations of reference materials, equipment, and professional development opportunities to meet the needs of EducationUSA centers in their countries of responsibility.

ECA provides a continuum of professional development opportunities for all levels of EducationUSA advisers, comprising an on-line course for newly hired advisers, systematic REAC and country coordinator mentoring and guidance, and regional workshops that bring together advisers with REACs, ECA staff, and representatives of the U.S. higher education community.

These opportunities also include training in the United States to complement overseas professional development opportunities. Proposals should outline strategies for ensuring that U.S. and overseas professional activities for EducationUSA advisers are fully integrated with one another. Proposals should also describe the roles of REACs and of ECA program staff in the design and delivery of their activities. (Please note that the budget for adviser

professional development activities in the United States should only cover the period beginning January 1, 2013 since an existing cooperative agreement includes these activities until December 31, 2012.)

Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative strategies for all components of the program. Additional information about Component A is provided in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI).

**Component B: EducationUSA Advising Operational Support**

In cooperation with ECA, one or more recipient organizations will manage EducationUSA advising centers in the following regions:

- 1) Eurasia/Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia (six locations), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.
- 2) Middle East/North Africa: Egypt (two locations), Gaza, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank, and Yemen (two locations).

EducationUSA centers located in countries and regions not listed above will not receive direct operational support from ECA under Component B of this program.



The use of the current EducationUSA logo is critical to the identity of the network. More information about the network and an up-to-date EducationUSA center list is located at <http://educationusa.info>. Proposals under Component B should explain how recipients will ensure that all centers funded under a cooperative agreement for this program use the logo consistently.

Proposals should describe in detail for each country the entire range of EducationUSA advising activities, which include group and individual consultations, as well as outreach. Proposals should also explain how the ECA-funded EducationUSA program will be coordinated with any additional educational advising activity administered by the recipient organization, and how any income generated by EducationUSA advisers supported by ECA under the cooperative agreement will be contributed to the recipient organization's cost-share.

Additional information about Component B is provided in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI).

**I. Funding Opportunity Description:****Authority:**

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Purpose:** To facilitate and increase the flow of international students to the United States in an effort to deepen and expand understanding of U.S. society, culture, and values in other countries, and to expand the understanding of foreign cultures and societies by

Americans through the increased participation of U.S. students in study abroad programs, especially in non-traditional study abroad destinations. The work of EducationUSA centers is critical to ECA's pursuit of these objectives.

**Additional Guidelines**

Each proposal submitted for this competition should reflect a vision that includes innovative ideas and recommendations. The narrative portion of the proposal for each program component should not exceed 20 pages.

Proposals may use appendices to illustrate elements of the narrative.

Applicants must also provide a separate administrative and program budget for each program component. Where possible, proposals for more than one component or for more than one region under Component B should reflect economies of scale and demonstrate administrative efficiencies.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further information.

**II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement(s)

In a cooperative agreement, ECA is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The ECA program office activities and responsibilities with recipient organizations for both components of this program are as follows:

- Provide policy guidance and direction to the recipient organization, approve staff requirements and selections, work and travel plans, and budgets;
- Monitor REACs' relationships and facilitate REAC communications with advisers, public affairs sections, ECA offices, U.S universities, Fulbright commissions, cooperative agreement recipients, adviser host organizations, and other institutions;
- Assist, where necessary and possible, with facilitating REAC access to U.S. embassies/consulates and with arrangements for APO or pouch privileges to speed receipt of educational materials through public affairs sections of U.S. embassies/consulates;
- Consult with REACs on the review of annual country advising strategic plans from public affairs sections

of U.S. embassies/consulates; review requests for additional funding for resources, workshops, and outreach; review REAC work and travel plans, adviser travel requests, professional development nominations, workshop venues and agendas; consult with REACs and recipient organization staff regarding substantive advising issues;

- Encourage regular and open communications among REACs, advisers, adviser host organization supervisors, public affairs sections, ECA offices, Fulbright commissions, and cooperative agreement recipient organizations;
- Participate in annual REAC strategic planning workshops;
- Consult with public affairs sections at U.S. embassies/consulates and REACs to oversee and evaluate the quality of advising services and to identify appropriate center locations;
- Contribute substantively to the establishment of specific annual work goals and annual performance evaluations for REACs;
- Review all program outreach materials;

- Review training curricula, program location and content, and scheduling;
- Select program participants in coordination with REACs and public affairs sections at U.S. embassies/consulates;
- Conduct training sessions for which program office staff has appropriate expertise and organize meetings with Department of State representatives for professional development programs;
- Perform an annual review of program administration under the cooperative agreement. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

Proposal narratives should include commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration, and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two option years are exercised.

The amount of FY 2013 resources that will be available for this program cannot be determined until FY2013 funds are appropriated. However, for planning purposes applicant organizations may submit budgets in this competition in the amounts noted below.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2013 - base year; FY 2014 - option year-one; FY 2015 - option year-two, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** Approximately \$21,400,000. This figure represents base year (\$7,000,000) plus two option years (\$7,200,000 each fiscal year), pending successful performance and availability of funds.

**Component A: Global EducationUSA Services: Regional and Country Coordination, Outreach, and Adviser**

**Professional Development:** approximately \$5,600,000  
(base year)

**Component B: Educational Advising Operational Support:**

a. Eurasia/Central Asia - approximately \$800,000  
(base year)

b. Middle East/North Africa - approximately \$600,000  
(base year)

**Approximate Number of Awards:** three

**Approximate Average Award:** Not Applicable

**Floor of Award Range:** \$600,000 (base year)

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$5,600,000 (base year)

**Anticipated Award Date:** Pending availability of funds,  
October 1, 2012.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** September 30, 2016.

This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award -  
one base year plus two option years.

**Additional Information:** Cooperative agreements will be  
awarded for a period of 12 months (FY 2013) with options  
for two additional 12-month periods (option years FY 2014  
and FY 2015). ECA will notify the recipient of our  
intention to exercise or not exercise an option year at  
least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year  
after an internal evaluation of the recipient's  
performance. The decision of exercise option years will  
depend both on the satisfactory performance of the  
recipient and the availability of funds.

### **III.) Eligibility Information:**

#### **III.1. Eligible applicants:**



Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

Consortia or other combinations of organizations applying for awards should designate one organization to be the recipient of the award. Proposals from consortia or other combinations of institutions should provide a detailed description of the responsibilities of each partner organization.

Organizations with primary responsibility for project implementation under either component of this program must have an office and staff in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area at the time of application.

### **III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:**

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, organization must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

### **III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making three awards, ranging from \$600,000 up to \$5,600,000, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this

exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchange programs are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

#### **IV. Application and Submission Information:**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

##### **IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 2200 C Street NW, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone: 202-632-6335, email: FrisbieJE@state.gov to request a solicitation package. Please refer to the funding opportunity number ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B located at the top of this announcement when making your request. Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from

grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The solicitation package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Jean Frisbie, program officer, and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet:  
The entire solicitation package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at is:

<http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2/html> , or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3.       Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the solicitation package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission section below.

IV.3a.       You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b.       All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in the CCR until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in the CCR will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees,

regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its

USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the



oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2200 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

#### IV.3d.2 **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be

balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### IV.3d.3. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes

are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3d.4. Describe your plans for sustainability, overall program management, staffing, and coordination with ECA and PAS.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget, as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Indirect costs may not be charged against participant program costs.

**For competitions that will be renewed through the option year, applicants must submit:**

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending

successful program performance and availability of funds; and

- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two option years).

**To exercise the option year mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:**

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year. This request should be incorporated/ highlighted in the third quarterly program report;
3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested option year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

**The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:**

- 1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of



communication and dialogue before exercising additional option years. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2.) review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;

- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional option years.

- Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.

- The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent option years.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the components include the following:

- 1) Global EducationUSA services director, regional educational advising coordinators (REACs), country coordinators, and outreach/technology manager salaries, benefits, health insurance, retirement;

- 2) Costs for REAC professional development and for facilitating communication and information flow among coordinators and with advising centers;
- 3) Part-time assistant salaries;
- 4) REAC and country coordinator travel;
- 5) Logistical support and equipment;
- 6) Cost of organizing overseas EducationUSA adviser professional development programs;
- 7) Salaries and fringe benefits for professional development staff; travel and per diem;
- 8) Professional development participant program costs; i.e., international/domestic travel, visas, and per diem for non-U.S. embassy- and consulate-employed advisers; conference registration and lodging reservations for all participating EducationUSA advisers;
- 9) Professional development program EducationUSA adviser website and support activities;
- 10) Campus visit logistics for professional development activities and conference participation;
- 11) Advising center staff salaries and benefits;
- 12) Resource materials, computer equipment for centers and coordinators;

- 13) Office supplies and expenses, including rent, communications, postage and shipping;
- 14) Outreach, publicity, and special project costs;
- 15) Other direct costs, inclusive of rent, utilities, and the like;
- 16) Indirect costs, which may not be charged against participant program costs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

#### IV.3F. APPLICATION DEADLINE AND METHODS OF SUBMISSION:

Application Deadline Date: Friday, July 6, 2012

Reference Number: ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B

Methods of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from

transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7AM - 9PM Eastern Time

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation.

Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

**V.1. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

**REVIEW CRITERIA**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

**1. Quality of the program idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

**2. Program planning/Ability to achieve program objectives:** Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

**3. Multiplier effect/impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

**4. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).



**5. Institutional Capacity/Institution's Record/Ability:**

Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

**6. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

**7. Project Evaluation:** Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit

intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

**8. Cost-effectiveness:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

**9. Improved Productivity and Innovation:** The applicant's proposal should specify and verify the prospect of improved productivity as well as proposed program innovations in implementing the activity.

## **VI.) Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized

Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.1b. The following additional requirements apply to this project:

A critical component of the Administration's Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants or cooperative agreements for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this

vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

**Note:** To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact ECA/A/S/A Program Officer Bahareh Moradi, 202-632-6350, e-mail: [MoradiBX@state.gov](mailto:MoradiBX@state.gov) for additional information.

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact ECA/A/S/A Program Officer Andy Masloski, 202-632-6337, e-mail: [MasloskiA@state.gov](mailto:MasloskiA@state.gov), for additional information.

## **VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at [reportseca@state.gov](mailto:reportseca@state.gov) with a copy sent to the Program Officer. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> . Failure to comply with these reporting requirements

may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 5.) If the Competition will allow for the exercise of Option Years, applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data.

The reports will be reviewed by both *the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer*.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

**All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.**

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jean Frisbie, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs, ECA/A/S/A, SA-5, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-6335, FAX 202-632-9479, [frisbieje@state.gov](mailto:frisbieje@state.gov).



All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/A/S/A-13-01-OY-B.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:****Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative.

Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding.

Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.